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DEPARTMENT FOR INR/R/MR, EAP/RSP/TC, EAP/PA, EAP/PD -  
ROBERT PALLADINO  
DEPARTMENT PASS AIT/WASHINGTON

E.O. 12958: N/A

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SUBJECT: MEDIA REACTION: U.S.-CHINA-TAIWAN RELATIONS

A) "Charter Flights for the Chinese New Year - Both Sides of the Taiwan Strait Interact to Get What They Want"

Journalist Chu Chien-ling said in the centrist, pro-status quo "China Times: (1/10):

". To view the matter from a deeper perspective, even though those who are in charge on both sides of the Taiwan Strait did not talk about it directly, the subtle position held by the United States in cross-Strait interactions must have been one of the major factors behind the fact that the authorities on both sides of the Taiwan Strait are willing to put aside their political concerns and have chosen to push for the charter flights for the Chinese New Year. Over the past year, Washington's cross-Strait policy has been evidently tilting toward China. For Beijing, political dialogue across the Taiwan Strait is not viable for the time being as a result of the DPP's advocacy for Taiwan independence. But to actively promote charter flights for the Chinese New Year - an attempt that may lead to realization of the three-links across the Taiwan Strait - can at least demonstrate the non-political, mild and rational aspects of Beijing's Taiwan policy and thereby win the United States' recognition. For the DPP, President Chen Shui-bian's remarks on [Taiwan's] new constitution and name change plan during the 2004 parliamentary campaign have seriously upset the U.S. authorities, who regarded such remarks as an attempt to destroy the status quo of the Taiwan Strait. The DPP will lose U.S. support if it fails to alleviate cross-Strait tension in a short period of time. This is something that the DPP government is aware of and contemplating. ."

B) "Relationship Between Taipei, Washington Needs Nurturing"

The conservative, pro-unification, English-language "China Post" editorialized (1/10):

". Official Taipei tends to believe its relations with Washington won't turn sour no matter what it does, except declaring independence. That's why [Taipei's representative in Washington David] Lee meant to say those 'slips of the tongue' [i.e. recent remarks by Secretary of State Colin Powell and Deputy Secretary of

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State Richard Armitage on Taiwan] were no warnings of a change in relations between Taiwan and the United States.

"Perhaps they are not warnings. The fact, however, remains that Washington was irritated by what President Chen Shui-bian had said and done during the long 2004 parliamentary campaign. This loose cannon must have frustrated the United States. His promise to give Taiwan a new Constitution, for instance, was an attempt to change unilaterally the status quo as Washington defines it. He wanted to call all missions abroad, including that of Lee's in Washington, Taiwan offices. Wasn't it only natural for some American officials to vent their pent-up frustration when they had a chance?

"President Chen has been baiting China successfully, but he cannot afford to bait the United States."

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